

## **History of the Out-of-Body Experience**

by Wagner Alegretti

There is an abundance of literature available on astral projection these days. Books address the benefits and consequences of this phenomenon, and techniques for producing it. The fact that is often overlooked however, is that this phenomenon, also known as astral travel, out-of-body experience or conscious projection, is as natural as being human, and as old as humanity – perhaps even more ancient than this. Leaving the body is as natural as breathing or sleeping. It is an intrinsic part of human life, and also of the lives of less evolved subhuman forms.

Many people who manage to leave their body with lucidity relate having seen their domestic animals, like dogs, projected and active outside their bodies. If an animal today is able to leave its body, we can conclude that primitive men living in caves experimented with the same phenomenon.

History has provided us with a diversity of documentation on astral projections. These accounts give us an idea of the universal character of this capacity to leave the body. The following examples illustrate this point.

Some of the earliest evidence of the phenomenon appeared in Ancient Egypt, between 5,000 and 3,000 years ago. The Egyptian priests knew of the existence of the astral body. They called it the Kha and they etched inscriptions and drawings on the stone walls of many temples and buildings, depicting it as something subtle and light abandoning the physical body. During this time, initiations were created with the objective of testing the individual's capacity to leave the body and materialize him/herself either partially or totally in front of a group of persons.

In Ancient Greece, references to astral projection can be found in the Temple of Eleusis, in the writings of the philosophers Plato, Hermotimus of Clazomene, Herodotus and in some reports of the historian Plutarch of Queroneia. Plutarch for example, documented the story of Arisdeu, which took place in the 79th year of the first century AD. Arisdeu was a dishonest individual who had a bad reputation in his community. Following an accident in which he fell and hit his head against a rock, he fell into a coma which lasted a few days. During this coma, Arisdeu perceived himself outside his body. He had an encounter with his helper, or spiritual guide, and talked to her. During this experience, Arisdeu also visited another dimension that was inhabited by consciousnesses with little equilibrium and he stayed to examine them. Then, at a certain moment, he felt a force pulling him back to his comatose body. Arisdeu awoke from the coma (in the physical plane) just as he was about to be buried. One can imagine the reaction of his community. Owing to this experience, Arisdeu re-examined his ethics, values and behaviour, and transformed himself into a respected citizen valued in his community. Today we clearly understand that he had a near-death-experience, which is not considered uncommon nowadays.

It is worth noting that there are numerous references to cases of conscious projection in the Bible. Some of these may be found in Ezequiel, III:14; Apocalypse of Juan, 1:10 and 11; 4:2; and in the Epistles of Pablo of Tarsus (II Corynthios, 12:2).

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Continuing through history, during the Middle Ages, due to the great repression of the Inquisition, the conscious projection was practiced, studied and known only within certain schools or secret societies. These esoteric and occult movements continued to hide information from the population even after the Inquisition, inclusively creating the basis for current myths and lies about the dangers of astral projections, and doing nothing to challenge the old, established structure of power and hierarchy.

Three great pioneers in the study of astral projection emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries. They were the first to popularize astral travel, even publishing books on the subject. They were the Swedish philosopher Emmanuel Swedenborg; the French writer and novelist Honore de Balzac, with his story 'Louis Lambert' and the Frenchman Allan Kardec, creator of spiritism. Other historical figures to have made significant contributions in this field include Apollonius of Tyana, Antonio of Padua, Padre Pío and Sai Baba.

The most important fact to emerge from studying the history of the out-of-body experience is that this phenomenon is ancient and universal. These experiences occur independently of a person's culture, education, financial situation, religion, credo, sex or age.

The out-of-body experience is positive and immensely beneficial. It is important therefore that the unfounded brainwashing on this topic that has persisted throughout the ages, largely due to ignorance, cease. Today the science of projectiology is dedicated to the study of this phenomenon. Any person can develop his capacities, perceptions and self control, to arrive at the point of having a conscious astral projection.

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